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Chaos:Standards

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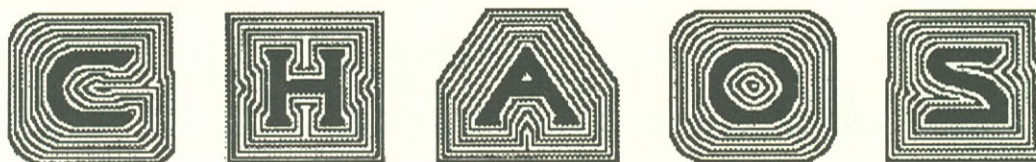


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Standards, Standards, and More Standards

by Sandra K. Paul (SKP Associates)

There is finally good news to report on the bar coding front! I indicated in earlier columns that the standard serial issue identifier on which the SISAC Symbol is based was voted upon by the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) members and received several "NO" votes. ALL OF THOSE NOs HAVE NOW BEEN RESOLVED and the standard should be approved by ANSI before this issue of *Against the Grain* is published.

Several positive modifications were made in the standard in the course of the voting procedure. The first in the name of the identifiers, which were changed to more readily accommodate electronic serial publications. Originally the Standard Issue Identifier (SIID) and Standard Article and Issue Identifier (SAID), the final names are the Standard Item Identifier (SII) and Standard Item and Contribution Identifier (SICI). The other changes are minor, but important and include provision of a mechanism to identify unexpectedly combined issues and clarification of the coding of some situations not previously considered.

As previously indicated in this column, within the next six months John Wiley, Elsevier and Pergamon will join Kluwer in printing this bar code SISAC Symbol on ALL of their publications. So will *Scan News*, a newsletter for those in the bar coding business. I hope that Editor George Goldberg will highlight this change in the text of the newsletter, bringing this new standard to his readers' attention. Now it's up to all of you who are responsible for checking-in serials in your library to be certain that your check-in system can scan the bar code on scientific, technical and professional journals (the SISAC Symbol) AND the code on popular consumer magazines

(the Universal Product Code) <UPC> and send the data found in those symbols into the system to retrieve the next expected issue of a specific journal. Ask your system vendor — or your programmer if you use an in-house system — to be certain that you're ready to take advantage of this exciting, time-saving, error-saving, new tool!

Use of the SISAC Symbol is certain to be one of the topics of a Preconference to the American Library Association meeting in 1992, although the planning for that Preconference has just begun. Scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 1992 — MARK YOUR CALENDAR — this one day Preconference will be co-sponsored by all of our favorite acronyms: standards developers NISO, BISAC, SISAC and Accredited Standards Committee X12; and the Serials Section of ALA ALCTS.

Unfortunately, the previously reported attempts to resolve the chaos in bar coding of books have NOT met with success. Book publishers are still faced with pressure from supermarkets and drug stores for the price-point UPC, from Wal Mart and specialty store owners for an item-specific UPC, and from Waldenbooks for the Bookland EAN on ALL books, including mass market paperbacks. At a meeting of BISAC's Machine-Readable Coding Subcommittee it was agreed that nothing can be resolved until the Uniform Code Council's Study of the price-point UPC is complete. The Uniform Code Council (UCC) assured the Subcommittee that the Study would be completed before the end of the year. SKP Associates is working with the UCC on this study and welcomes input from *Against the Grain* readers. Send any suggestion for areas of concern related to the price-point coding of books of

consumer magazines to Sandy Paul, SKP Associates, 160 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010.

BISAC's Machine-Readable Coding Subcommittee will be considering an intriguing library-related inquiry in the near future. Representatives of two major library systems suggested that they were willing to pay up to \$.15 PER COPY if publishers would print, on the back cover of the books they ship to those libraries, the Bookland EAN (which identifies the specific title by its ISBN) followed by a DIFFERENT number in the EAN add-on on each copy of the same title shipped to the same library. As you might suspect, these librarians are seeking an accession number as well as title identifier to allow them to do away with their own bar coding of new receipts. Several major publishers are looking into the costs of implementing this concept. I'll keep you posted!

Considering all of the activities underway in the bar coding area, I am most impressed with the book and serial industry attempts to provide printed symbols that meet their customers' needs. However, I must also draw your attention to the ALA LITA Fuzzy Match Interest Group's Bar Coding Project. After attempting to code every bar in Chicago because ALA met there three times in a row, I wonder how they will proceed, since all of the upcoming ALA meetings will be held in different cities for the next few years. I hope someone attending their meeting in Atlanta will suggest that they move this project to Charleston, which certainly has bars worth coding — and a consistent flow of librarians to take on this important project. Volunteers to move this bar coding initiative to Charleston in November, 1992 should contact Sandy Paul at the address shown above. Thanks! ☘